

Ethelene Jones-Crockett, Michigan's first female African-American obstetrician and gynecologist—who was also the wife of former Congressman George W. Crockett, Jr.—delivered her youngest three children.

Mrs. Jones devoted her career at Detroit Public Schools as a para-professional teaching assistant to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to receive a quality education. She was raised in the Church of Christ and remained an active member throughout her life teaching Bible class and serving on numerous committees.

Mrs. Blanche Jones was a close confidant to my mother, Mildred Massey and me. Regardless of her health condition, she was always positive and upbeat. There was no question about her love and she generously shared it with everyone.

Blanche Jones was a “woman of distinction and grace”. She loved clothes and I will always remember wearing a white wool coat and hat that she loved. I shopped all over the country looking for one to give her and regrettably could not find one. I did give her a white wool jacket—and my hat. The twinkle in her eyes and her words of gratitude were reminders of her thankfulness for the small things in life.

Blanche was a brilliant woman. She read, kept up on current events and politics and had her own very strong opinions about issues which we discussed many times. Her family describes her as the Chairwoman on BNN: the Blanche News Network.

There is a tremendous void in my life now and I will miss her deeply. She touched the lives of many and leaves a legacy with her work and compassion that will long endure. In her memory, let us live our lives as Mrs. Blanche Jones did and would want us to do—as loving and supportive human beings.

Today, California's 13th Congressional District joins Michigan's 13th Congressional District to salute and honor a remarkable woman, Mrs. Blanche Lone Jones. We will miss her tremendously and know that her legacy and spirit will live on forever.

#### A TRIBUTE IN HONOR OF THE LIFE OF THE HONORABLE JOHN VASCONCELLOS

**HON. ANNA G. ESHOO**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 18, 2014*

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise with my colleagues, Congresswoman KAREN BASS, Congressman XAVIER BECERRA, Congressman AMI BERA, Congresswoman JULIA BROWNLEY, Congresswoman LOIS CAPPS, Congressman TONY CÁRDENAS, Congresswoman JUDY CHU, Congressman JIM COSTA, Congresswoman SUSAN DAVIS, Congressman SAM FARR, Congressman JOHN GARAMENDI, Congresswoman JANICE HAHN, Congressman JARED HUFFMAN, Congressman MIKE HONDA, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, Congresswoman ZOE LOFGREN, Congressman JERRY MCNERNEY, Congresswoman LINDA SÁNCHEZ, Congresswoman LORETTA SANCHEZ, Congressman ALAN LOWENTHAL, Congresswoman DORIS MATSUI,

Congresswoman GLORIA NEGRETE MCLEOD, Congressman GEORGE MILLER, Congresswoman GRACE NAPOLITANO, Congresswoman NANCY PELOSI, Congressman SCOTT PETERS, Congresswoman LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD, Congressman RAUL RUIZ, Congressman ADAM SCHIFF, Congressman BRAD SHERMAN, Congresswoman JACKIE SPEIER, Congressman ERIC SWALWELL, Congressman MARK TAKANO, Congressman MIKE THOMPSON, Congressman JUAN VARGAS, Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS, and Congressman HENRY WAXMAN to honor the life of our friend who distinguished himself for 38 years in public service, the Honorable John Vasconcellos, who died on May 24, 2014, at his home in Santa Clara, California.

John was born on May 11, 1932, in San Jose, California, to a Portuguese father and German mother. He graduated from Bellarmine College Preparatory High School with top honors, and attended Santa Clara University, graduating magna cum laude. After two years of service to his country in the Army, he graduated again at the top of his class from Santa Clara University's Law School. He practiced law before joining Governor Pat Brown's staff, and was soon recruited by his many friends and admirers to run for a seat in the California State Assembly in 1966. This began almost forty years of public service. John was a legislator's legislator. He had a brilliant intellect and a compassionate heart. He became the Chairman of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee, one of the most powerful assignments in the California Legislature. He proposed the State Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem in October 1986, and in 1989, Speaker Willie Brown appointed him to Chair the Select Assembly Committee on Ethics. He was elected to the California State Senate in 1996, representing the heart of Silicon Valley, and served as Chairman of the Public Safety, Education, and Economic Development Committees.

John Vasconcellos' 38 year tenure in the California Legislature was reflective of the innovative Silicon Valley District he represented. He was a disruptor and a pioneering public servant who was ahead of his time. His legislative work is widely recognized for its groundbreaking innovations in public safety, state budgets, ethics, health and human services, as well as in education. He wrote first-of-its-kind legislation addressing AIDS research, medical marijuana, and family health. He wrote legislation combating toxic chemicals in our atmosphere; he paved the way for midwives to practice; and he promoted child care at all public colleges. He saw the need before others to modernize our education system and make it affordable for all. He involved young people in the political process, launching programs like shadowing legislators in the State Capitol.

John was an avid subscriber to the human-potential movement therapies to deal with the rage, tension and fear that continued to grow in our society. We called John our friend, and we were very proud to do so, but he was also a brother and a mentor to many of us and we will miss him always.

Mr. Speaker, we ask the entire House of Representatives to join us in honoring Senator John Vasconcellos, a brilliant visionary with a giant heart who served his constituents, his

state and his country with integrity and respect for building the politics of trust. We extend our condolences to his brother Jim Vasconcellos, his sister Margaret Brindle, his niece Beth Brindle, his Hawaiian family, including his chosen son Mitch Saunders, his daughter-in-law Cindy and his two beloved grandchildren Megan and Briana, as well as his devoted staff, his large circle of extended friends and family in California, Hawaii and around the world.

#### FISCAL YEAR 15 TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING, AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

**HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 18, 2014*

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Fiscal Year 2015 Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (H.R. 4745). This bill provides \$1.8 billion less than the FY 14 omnibus. It underfunds too many critical investments that maintain and support our infrastructure and housing.

Specifically, I strongly oppose the dramatic cut and new restrictions on the TIGER program. House Republicans included only \$100 million for TIGER grants, an 80 percent cut from FY 14. While this extreme cut in funding is disappointing, more concerning are the restrictions placed on the grant program. H.R. 4745 specifically states that only highway, bridge, freight rail and port projects are eligible for TIGER grants. Public transit, including light rail and passenger rail, would no longer be eligible for these critical dollars. Republican leaders repeatedly stated that the provision was inserted to focus TIGER grants on what they call “essential projects.” In my district and many other communities across the country, public transit is an essential project. My communities depend on these dollars to help support passenger rail and multimodal projects, such as light rail, streetcars and dedicated Bus Rapid Transit.

In addition to TIGER, other transit initiatives were cut, including New Starts (a 13 percent cut) and Amtrak (a 14 percent cut). This ongoing attack on public transit is unacceptable.

Unfortunately, the investments in housing in this bill are also insufficient. HOME Investment Partnership Grants were cut by 30 percent, to near historic lows. In my district, the HOME program is used to help first time homebuyers with the cost of a down payment and closing cost, which can be prohibitive for many buyers looking for a first home of their own. Another program supported by HOME finances maintenance to preserve federally supported housing, especially important considering the shortage of affordable housing. A 30 percent cut to these programs means fewer homebuyers helped and critical repairs to decaying affordable housing are unaddressed.

Transportation and housing are the backbone of our communities. Stable, affordable housing and access to jobs helps to stabilize communities and promote economic growth. H.R. 4745 fails to sufficiently invest in our communities and I urge my colleagues to oppose it.